

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 133741

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPA, SF

SUBJECT: NASA TRACKING STATION

1. ON BASIS EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS OF FUTURE TECHNICAL SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS, NASA HAS MADE DECISION THAT CONTINUATION OF JOHANNESBURG DEEP SPACE STATION (DSS-51) FACILITY BEYOND MID974 NO LONGER JUSTIFIED AND PLANS TO SHIFT ALL DEEP SPACE SUPPORT FROM THERE TO MADRID IN MAY-JUNE 1974.

2. CURRENT EXAMINATION BY NASA OF REQUIREMENTS FOR JOHANNESBURG STDN STATION INDICATES A CONTINUING NEED ONLY THROUGH APPROXIMATELY SEPTEMBER 1975 WHEN PRESENT AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICA TERMINATES. FYI. AFTER THAT TIME, REQUIREMENTS FOR STDN IN THAT AREA CAN BE HANDLED BY ONE STATION AND, BECAUSE OF UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST LOOK AT LAUNCHES FROM WESTERN TRACKING RANGE, MADAGASCAR IS THE PREFERRED LOCATION. END FYI. NASA TENTATIVE PLANNING THEREFORE IS TO PHASE OUT OF JOHANNESBURG BY LATE 1975. NASA EXPECTS GIVE DEFINITIVE NOTICE TO THIS EFFECT SOMETIME WITHIN NEXT YEAR, BUT IS MAKING FURTHER DEFINITION AND STUDY OF TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS BEYOND 1975 BEFORE TAKING  
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FINAL ACTION.

3. DEPARTMENT AND NASA ORIGINALLY INTENDED ADVISE SAG AND CSIR OF ABOVE PLANS DURING THIRD WEEK OF JULY BY HAVING AMBASSADOR INFORM SAG IN PRETORIA WHILE AT SAME TIME GERALD TRUSZYNSKI, NASA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR TRACKING AND DATA ACQUISITION, VISITED SOUTH AFRICA TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF TRACKING STATION PHASE DOWN WITH DR. HEWITT OF CSIR. SCENARIO HAS BEEN CHANGED HOWEVER BY AMBASSADOR BOTHA ASKING LAST WEEK THAT NASA ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR WILLIS SHAPLEY MEET WITH HIM TUESDAY, JULY 10 TO DISCUSS RECENT CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENTS AT TIME NASA APPROPRIATION BILL CONSIDERED CONCERNING NASA PRESENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA. IT WAS FELT NASA CURRENT THINKING ON STATION AT JOHANNESBURG COULD NOT BE WITHHELD FROM BOTHA WHEN ABOUT TO BE CONVEYED TO SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES IN PRETORIA WITHIN MATTER OF DAYS.

4. PRESENT PLANS NOW ARE FOR BOTHA TO MEET WITH ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROSS AND ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR SHAPLEY AT 10 A.M. TUESDAY, JULY 10 WHEN THE AMBASSADOR WILL BE TOLD OF NASA INTENTIONS. THIS IS TO BE FOLLOVED BY DELIVERY OF JULY 5 LETTER TO HEWITT FROM TRUSZYNSKI ATTACHING ADVANCE COPY OF LETTER TO CSIR PRESIDENT BRINK FROM NASA FLETCHER (TRANSMITTED TO ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DUNCAN IN CLASSIFIED POUCH ETA PRETORIA JULY 8 REGISTRY NO. 2263425) WHICH EMBASSY REQUESTED GET TO HEWITT PERSONALLY BETWEEN 4 AND 5 O'CLOCK LOCAL TIME TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 10. NASA WILL INFORM ITS CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON. CHAIRMEN HUMPHREY AND DIGGS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEES ON AFRICA WILL SIMILARLY BE TOLD BY STATE. NASA PLANS ISSUE PRESS RELEASE AT 5 P.M. TUESDAY, JULY 10. ADVANCE COPY WILL BE SENT EMBASSY.

5. THRUST OF ALL EXCHANGES ON SUBJECT WILL BE TO EMPHASIZE THAT NASA ACTION RE JOHANNESBURG STATION DICTATED BY TECHNICAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS ONLY AND TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATION THAT DECISION RESULT OF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS. EMBASSY SHOULD FOLLOW SAME LINE IN REPLYING INQUIRIES THAT MAY BE DIRECTED TO IT. RUSH  
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